THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): Central Electicity Authority (CEA) has reported that no thermal power station in the country is on the verge of closure.

The Planning Commission has assessed the demand for coal for power sector for the year 1995-96 at 184.20 million tonnes. The total despatches of coal to power sector from Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) during April, 1995 to January, 1996 were 151.048 million tonnes as against the target of despatches of 150.168 million tonnes for this period. This is 100.58% of the target. The despatches have also shown an increase of 10.9% over similar period last year. Some thermal power stations are, however, having low stocks. The reasons for low stocks with the power houses include.

(i) Excess consumption of coal as compared to the quantities which the coal companies are required to supply to these power houses.

(ii) Unloading constraints at the power house end.

(iii) Coal supplies begin restricted due to non-payment of coal sale dues by the power houses.

(iv) Movement constraints of the Railways; and

(v) Supplies getting affected on account of sporadic strikes in SCCL and due to inundation of some mines in the eastern parts of the country.

Study of Trade Reforms and Exports

1100. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a study entitled "Trade Reforms and Exports Issues and Challenges" conducted by BERF (Birla Economic Research Foundation) as reported in the 'Hindistan Times' dated 21st February, 1996;

(b) whether Government agree with BERF that "27% exports growth rate is feasible" and if so, the steps Government envisage during 1996-97 to achieve this target; and

(c) whether Government have so far studied the likely effects of new GATT and WTO provisions on India's export performance and indeed on the Indian Economy as a whole during the next 10 years particularly from the Agro-sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. After taking into account the emerging trade scenario, the Government is hopeful that exports would grow at the rate of 20% during 1996-97 in $ terms. Continuous efforts are made to promote exports on a sustained basis. Steps are taken to boost exports in consultation with trade, industry and other concerned institutions. Among the measures taken for export promotion mention may be made about simplification of Export-Import Policy and procedure, increasing export production, improving efficiency and competitiveness, focussing on quality improvement and technological upgradation, improvement in infrastructure and efforts to actively involve the State Government in export promotion.

(c) Recently, the Government have Commissioned studies on export possibilities in the post Uruguay Round era in three major sectors viz., agricultural & allied products, industrial goods and services by leading Indian Research organisations so as to locate areas of advantage, identify products, countries and supportive policy measures required to explicit India's export potential.